

# What's in a Font: the Hidden Secrets of Society in Fonts

By Angie Kaufmann Faculty Sponsor Dr. Bovaird-Abbo

## Black Letter

- Originally used in hand written manuscripts.
- First used in print in the Gutenberg Bible (one of the first printed books)
- Went out of use in the 1500's with the exception of German speaking countries.

## Research Question:

What do font choices tell us about societal values?

## My Findings:

- Clarity is a main influencer in the use and invention of fonts
- Helvetica is the most widely used font in the present time.
- Modern fonts are recognizable by their thin, long horizontal serifs and clear-cut transitions on the strokes
- Newspaper headlines and product advertising resulted in more attention grabbing styles in the 19th century.
- The invention of the printing press de-personalized fonts and made the shift from pretty to productive.

## Helvetica:

- Used in print in the 1900s
- Still used in most signs and texts today.

**Frutiger**

Dramatic difference between thick and thin strokes

Diagonal, thin serifs on lower case letters, thick and thin strokes

**Bodoni**

Flat, thin, horizontal serifs on lower case letters.

## Conclusion:

Fonts create meaning and build connections, however, they have become more and more adapted to modern printing needs, which strips them of their personality. This may be a reflection of our modern need for productivity, control, and perfectionism

## Further Questions

Is it Society's obsession with minimalism and aesthetic cleanliness that makes desire to use Helvetica?

## Serif Fonts

- Have little feet
- The stress is vertical
- No handwritten characteristics